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Memorial Dedication to City of Austin's 'First Daughter' Set for Spicewood, 11 a.m., Sat., April 23

Descendants, DRT, color guard, re-enactors to honor early Travis County pioneers

SPICEWOOD, TX (April 4, 2011) – Musket fire, speeches, authentic re-enactors, a color guard and a lone bagpiper will fill the historic Collier-Gregg Cemetery in Spicewood at 11 a.m., Saturday, April 23, as descendants and dignitaries dedicate memorials to **Daniel and Elnora (Van Cleave) Brown**, hardy Texas pioneers.

Elnora was the first female child born in the fledgling City of Austin on April 14, 1841. Her father Lorenzo had come from Louisville, KY, in 1836, trading 18 months of military service for land, and helping build the young Republic's first capitol.

“What a beautiful time to honor our descendants, both citizens of the Republic of Texas and Pioneers of Travis County,” said **David Bowles** of San Antonio. “Spring wildflowers are in bloom, and this is the 175th Year (Terraquasquicentennial) of Texas Independence.”

Bowles, a speaker, historian and genealogist, is the great-grandson of Elnora, as well as the author of the “Westward Saga” series of historical novels.

Virginia Van Cleave, Chairwoman of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT) Alamo Committee, will make a presentation at the dedication. Members of the Sons of the American Revolution, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Sons of the Republic of Texas, the DRT, area genealogical societies and re-enactors will participate, many in period attire.

“Obviously, the Browns, who had 15 children, had a large extended family,” Bowles noted. “I encourage descendants of those 11 children who survived them to attend this memorial.” For more information, they can contact Bowles at 210-490-9955, david@westwardsagas.com, or check his website: www.westwardsagas.com.

The cemetery, which has no sign, is located at 504 Pace Bend Park Road North (C.R. 2322), Spicewood, TX 78669, three miles off TX Hwy. 71. The graveyard, situated in a pastoral, Hill Country setting, is behind the Pedernales Property Owners' Assn. Building at the Cat Hollow entrance to Lake Travis.

Elnora, Focus of Book 4

Bowles, an Austin native who has had leadership positions in many of the previously mentioned organizations, is known for his intense research. He fills in the gaps of known history with

fiction “to add true life drama. But everything in the books could have happened,” he emphasizes.

His “Book 1: Spring House” and “Book 2: Adam’s Daughters,” which follow Adam Mitchell and his descendants, beginning in North Carolina before the American Revolution, are currently available.

“Book 3 will be published this year,” confirmed the popular keynote speaker, story teller and civic leader. “I am already researching and outlining Book 4, which will be set in Texas in the early nineteenth century and undoubtedly include Elnora Brown.

“I grew up listening to the fascinating stories of my ancestors, reading about history and touring the many museums, libraries and state buildings of my hometown,” Bowles recalled. “After a stint in the U.S. Navy, a marketing career, a successful business ownership and decades of community service, I finally retired to pursue my lifelong passions of research, writing and history.”

A Dramatic, Colorful Life

That Elnora Van Cleve was born in Austin at all is a curious fact. Of the 856 residents counted during the city’s 1840 census, only 61 were females, and most of them were already married. But her father and 21-one-year-old Margaret Smith received the third of six marriage licenses issued that year, and Elnora was born nine months and one day later.

“It’s quite likely the couple met at the boarding house of Angelina Eberly,” Bowles surmised, “and that Elnora was an ear-witness to a December 1842 incident that became known as ‘The Archive War.’

“Eberly was the feisty innkeeper who fired the famous cannon shot along (now) Congress Avenue to warn the city that President Sam Houston had sent his men to take the records of the Republic back to the mosquito-infested banks of Buffalo Bayou (Houston).”

There also is a high probability that “Austin’s First Daughter” played with Austin’s first-born boy, Sam Houston Jones, the son of Dr. Anson Jones – later President of the Republic – who, along with his wife Mary, were neighbors of the Van Cleves on Pecan Street (now Sixth Street).

When her mother died at age 29 and her father did not remarry, Elnora grew into the role of mother to her four siblings: Cortes, 8; Wesley, 6; Alfonzo, 4, and Comely, 1. They all resided with her and her new husband Daniel Brown in the 1860 census.

She eventually had 15 children of her own, with three dying in childhood. Indians scalped her uncle and killed her grandfather near their homes, and Comanches abducted her young cousin.

Daniel and Elnora bought several parcels of land on the south side of the Pedernales River near the confluence of the Colorado River. The property now is at the end of the Old Ferry Road in northwest Travis County, near the Briar Cliff Subdivision, off Pace Bend Park Road.

Elnora died Jan. 2, 1900, at their home and was buried on private property in the cemetery.

Daniel is buried on private property on what was his home place on April 23, 1919. A centograph has been placed next to Elnora's grave, and the DRT has acknowledged her with a medallion identifying her as a "Citizen of the Republic of Texas."

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS, CONTACT:

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